

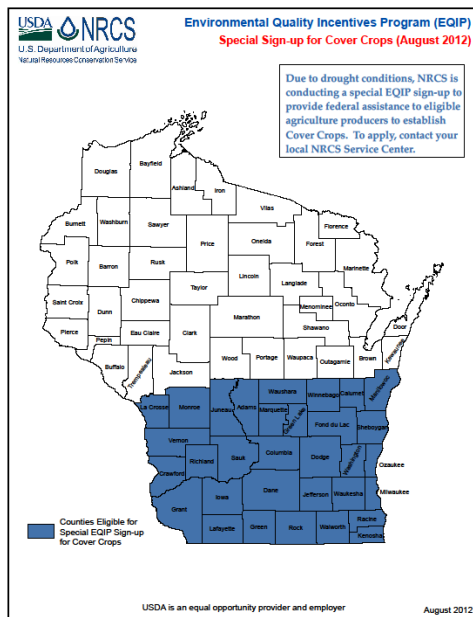
## **Environmental Quality Incentives Program Plan of Operations for Special Sign-Up for Cover Crops (August 2012)**

As a result of the drought conditions in Wisconsin in 2012, a special EQIP sign-up is being conducted specifically to provide financial assistance for establishment of cover crops in the summer/fall of 2012.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) offers financial assistance to agricultural producers to implement on-farm conservation practices. Eligible land is determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and is based on an identified resource concern. Eligible producers may apply for financial assistance for conservation practices that will address the identified resource concerns.

### **Eligible Areas for Sign-Up:**

The eligible area for this sign-up include the following counties: Adams, Calumet, Columbia, Crawford, Dane, Dodge, Fond du Lac, Grant, Green, Green Lake, Iowa, Jefferson, Juneau, Kenosha, LaCrosse, Lafayette, Manitowoc, Marquette, Milwaukee, Monroe, Ozaukee, Racine, Richland, Rock, Sauk, Sheboygan, Vernon, Walworth, Washington, Waukesha, Waushara, and Winnebago.



To be eligible for financial assistance, the Cover Crop conservation practice must be located on crop field(s) within an eligible county as identified above. If a crop field is split by a county boundary (i.e. some of the crop field is located within an eligible county and some of the crop field is located in a non-eligible county) then the entire field can be included in the application and can be eligible for financial assistance for the Cover Crop conservation practice.

### **Eligible Practices and Payment Rates:**

The only conservation practice eligible for financial assistance through this sign-up is Cover Crop (340).

The Cover Crop payment scenarios eligible for the sign-up as identified in the EQIP Cookbook are Scenario #1 (Non-Legume Cover Crop) and Scenario #3 (Legume Cover Crop). If the seeding mix will include both non-legume(s) and legume(s); then Scenario #3 may be selected as the payment scenario for the application/contract.

The following is the link to the “List of Eligible Practices and Payment Schedule FY 2012 Wisconsin” (i.e. EQIP Cookbook) document which identifies the payment rates for Cover Crop (340):

<http://www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/eqip12/WI%20EQIP%20cookbook%20FY12.pdf>

Applicants who certify they are a Beginning Farmer, Limited Resource Farmer, or a Socially Disadvantaged Farmer are eligible to receive a higher practice payment rate.

The following is the link to the Field Office Technical Guidance practice standard for Cover Crop (340):

<http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/WI/340.pdf>

The following is the link to the Wisconsin Agronomy Technical Note 7 Cover and Green Manure Crop Benefits to Soil Quality: <ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/WI/technotes/agronomy-tn7.pdf>

All practices must be scheduled in the contract to be installed in calendar year 2012.

### **Application Period:**

EQIP applications are accepted on a continuous basis throughout the year. The application deadline for this special sign-up is August 24, 2012. All eligible applications received by the close of business August 24, 2012 will be evaluated and ranked for funding consideration.

Interested agricultural producers may apply in person, by telephone, fax, email, or letter at the local NRCS Service Center. The following link provides the location and contact information for local NRCS Service Centers: [http://www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/office\\_search.html](http://www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/office_search.html)

A separate application form (i.e. NRCS-CPA-1200) does not need to be submitted if the applicant already has an existing unfunded application submitted for FY2012 EQIP.

### **Fund Pools:**

There is only 1 fund pool established for this sign-up. All eligible application will be ranked in the “FY12 Drought (Cover Crops)” fund pool.

### **Resource Concerns:**

Addressing soil erosion resource concerns in severe and extreme drought areas in Wisconsin is the priority for this special EQIP sign-up.

**Ranking:**

Scoring of applications will be done according to the application ranking document posted on the Wisconsin NRCS EQIP webpage. All rankings will be conducted in ProTracts. In the event of application ranking score ties, the application that has the higher tracking code (i.e. random number generated in ProTracts) will receive funding priority.

**Funding:**

NRCS will allocate the available funds based on the numerical ranking system set forth on the Wisconsin NRCS website. Applications will be selected for plan development and contracted in ranked order according to the application ranking score as funds allow.

If there are insufficient funds available to fund an application, applications not selected for contracting will be deferred to the next EQIP application ranking period.